

SAVING AND FINANCIAL CHOICES

Financial Priorities Challenge

Detailed practice, calculation, judgment, and assessment

GRADES 9-12	TIME 2 x 42 min	GROUPING I / pairs / whole	PRODUCT Consequence-based priority plan
YOUR CHALLENGE When available money cannot cover every obligation, rank choices by consequences, deadlines, protections, and available alternatives. Build a short-term plan, write communications, and identify the information a real decision would require.			

Decision Framework

Factor	Question
Health and safety	Could delay threaten food, shelter, medicine, utilities, or safe transportation?
Income and education	Could delay prevent work or school attendance or reduce future income?
Legal/contract consequence	Could delay trigger loss of service, default, penalties, or another formal consequence?
Deadline and flexibility	When is action required, and can the provider change the due date or plan?
Cost escalation	Will a small unpaid amount become much larger?
Alternatives/support	Is there a safe lower-cost substitute, benefit, hardship option, or trusted support?
NOT FINANCIAL ADVICE The scenarios are fictional. Real priorities depend on contracts, local protections, household needs, safety, and qualified assistance. Do not ignore a bill solely because a classroom ranking placed it later.	

Part 1 - The \$620 Challenge

Sam has \$620 available today. The next income of \$480 is expected in 10 days but is not guaranteed until deposited. Review the fictional obligations below.

Item	Amount	Deadline	Consequence	Flexibility / missing fact
Rent contribution	\$300	Today	Housing relationship; possible late consequence	Partial payment may be discussed
Prescription	\$65	Today	Health consequence	Generic/assistance must be verified
Transit pass	\$72	Tomorrow	Needed for work	Single fares cost more
Phone	\$58	3 days	Work scheduling/communication	Provider may offer arrangement
Groceries	\$120	7 days	Food	Plan lower-cost basket
Credit card minimum	\$45	5 days	Late fee/credit consequence under terms	Contact issuer
Streaming	\$18	2 days	Entertainment	Cancel/pause
Emergency savings	\$60	This pay cycle	Resilience goal	Can revise temporarily with recovery date
Friend repayment	\$80	Promised today	Trust/relationship	Communicate and agree on new date

Total obligations: _____ Available today: _____ Shortfall today: _____

Part 2 - Rank Before Paying

Item	Safety 0-3	Income/ school 0-3	Deadline 0 -3	Escalation 0 -3	Flexibility 0-3 (low flexibility=3)	Evidence note	Preliminary rank
Rent							
Prescription							
Transit							
Phone							
Groceries							
Credit card							
Streaming							
Emergency savings							
Friend repayment							

A score helps organize thinking; it does not make the decision automatically. Identify one factor that should override the total score.

Identify two missing facts that could change the top three priorities.

Part 3 - Build a 10-Day Plan

Action today	Amount	Balance left	Why now	Communication / next step
Starting cash	\$620	\$620		

Your plan must not exceed \$620. It must address prescription, transportation, food, housing, and at least one communication with a person or provider. You may use partial payments only when you clearly mark them as proposals requiring agreement.

Expected income in 10 days	Do not spend before deposit	First three actions after deposit	Amount
\$480	☐		

Part 4 - Communicate Before the Deadline

Draft a factual phone/email script for one provider or person. Include: identity verification through an official channel, amount/due date, what you can pay, requested arrangement, confirmation number or written record, and follow-up date. Do not include passwords, PINs, or full account numbers.

Offer Evaluation

Offer	Accept / decline / verify	Total cost or risk	Question before deciding
Payday loan covers the whole shortfall today.			
Credit-card issuer offers a due-date change with no stated fee.			
Friend agrees in writing to \$40 now and \$40 after deposit.			
Streaming service offers “three months half-price” if Sam does not cancel.			

Part 5 - Disruption and Revision

Day 4 update: the expected income will be \$380, not \$480, and it will arrive two days late. Revise the plan without spending money that has not arrived.

Original future action	Change	Revised action	Consequence managed	New communication

Final Priority Memo

Write 150–200 words explaining your first four actions, total paid today, remaining balance, one delayed item, one negotiated item, one rejected high-risk option, two missing facts, and the trigger for revising the plan.
